

A HISTORY OF THE
HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY GROUP

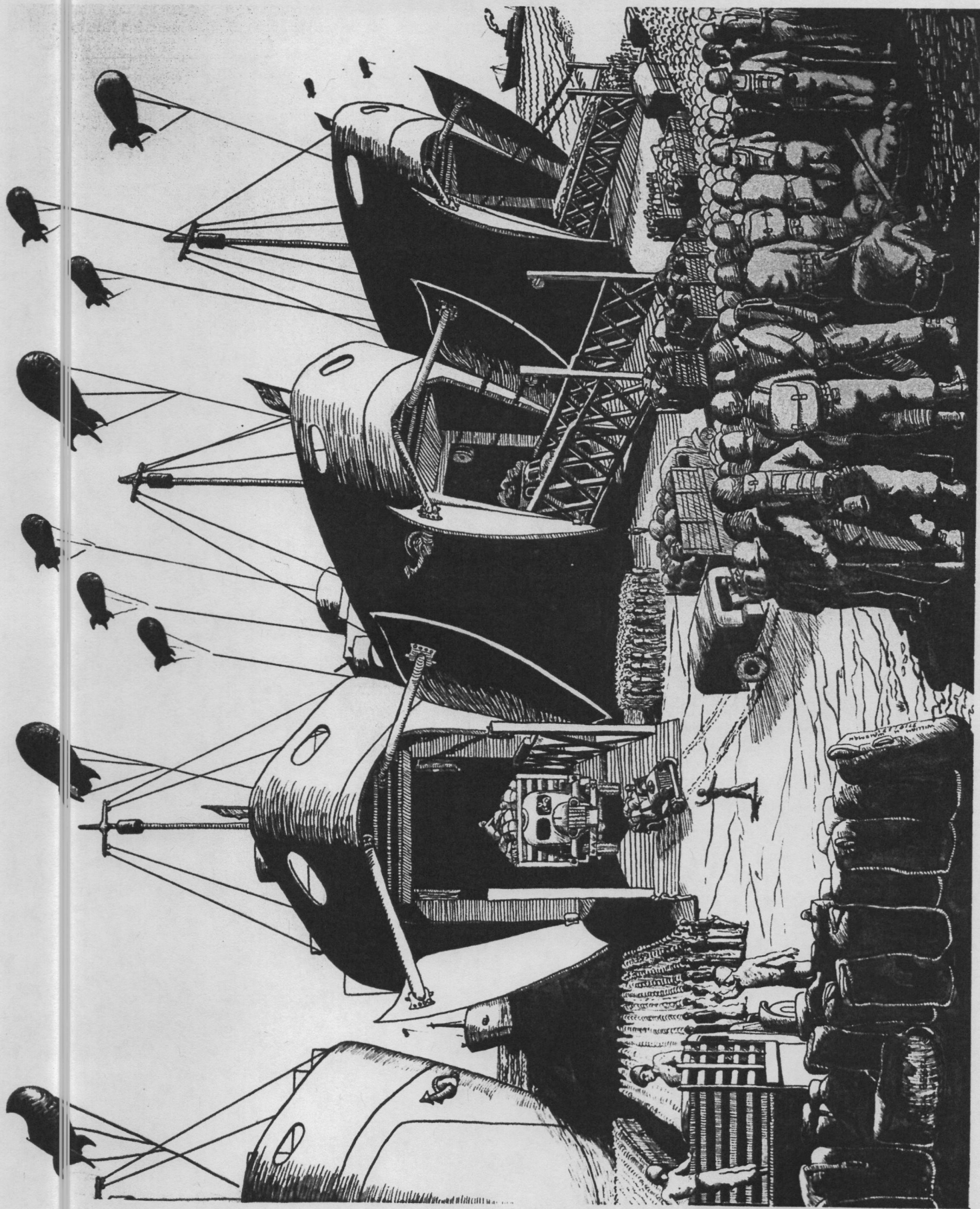
TABLE OF CONTENTS



SECTION	I Narrative
	II References
	III Chronology
	IV Glossary
	V Document File

Note: Section V is bound
separately.

Declassified
per telecon: Terry Johnson, JCS
to Brunda Regier 5/18/73
94H 5/21/73



SECTION I, NARRATIVE

CHAPTER I

CONCEPT AND ORGANIZATION

1. The Sixth Army Group Headquarters under command of Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, United States Army, was activated on 1 August 1944, at the small port of BASLIA, on the Northeastern coast of the Mediterranean Island of CORSICA. Organization of the headquarters was directed by General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, United States Army, in a cable to General Devers dated 14 July 1944. (1)* (Note: At date of mimeographing this chapter this cable is too highly classified for quotation).

2. Because the main purpose of Headquarters Sixth Army Group was the operational control of the DRAGOON Forces and increments to them, it follows that its background is essentially that of operation DRAGOON. In researching the planning phases of DRAGOON one will find little mention of DRAGOON but much on operation ANVIL. ANVIL was the original designation for plans for the invasion of Southern FRANCE. As the time for the invasion approached it was felt that security of the designation ANVIL might have been compromised and the new designation, DRAGOON, was substituted. This had the further advantage of obviating confusion which might have resulted from the fact that there were several alternative variations of the ANVIL plans where-as the term DRAGOON was applied only to the single plan adopted.

3. The advantages of DRAGOON were proven by the event and will be well known to most readers of this history. Together with operation OVERLORD to the North it cleared FRANCE of the enemy in an astonishingly short time with great loss to him in men and materiel; while Allied losses in the DRAGOON operation were relatively very small. Moreover, in its later stages, it protected the right flank of the Northern invasion forces, provided much needed ports on the MEDITERRANEAN and lines of communication from them to the front generally along the Eastern boundary of FRANCE.

4. The above advantages, except the phenomenal speed of advance, were well recognized in the planning stages but the decision to invade Southern FRANCE was not reached without much discussion and the consideration of at least one alternative plan.

5. The DRAGOON operation involved withdrawal from the ITALIAN front of three excellent U. S. divisions (VI Corps) and required considerable Air and logistical support that might otherwise have been applied to the campaign in ITALY which was an Anglo-American operation whereas DRAGOON was Franco-American so far as ground forces were concerned. In view of the British desire to carry the Italian campaign to an early and successful conclusion, it is not surprising that considerable opposition to the launching of operation DRAGOON was encountered. General Eisenhower intervened in favor of ANVIL-DRAGOON and offered to loan landing craft from his OVERLORD operation to augment those otherwise available. (2) A discussion of the background and general planning for ANVIL-DRAGOON is found in SACRED report, "The Invasion of Southern France", and in a message from General Sir Harold R. L. G. Alexander to General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, dated 8 June 1944, in which he presents his appreciation of the existing military situation. (3) Neither of these documents have yet been released for use in this history.

*Numbers in parenthesis refer to numbered references found in Section II.

6. Already operating at BASTIA was the Allied Force Headquarters Advance Detachment which had been opened 29 July by a small group headed by General Devers. (4) The mission of this detachment was the prompt decision on the priority for allocation of air support to the 7th Army in Southern FRANCE and to the allied armies operating in ITALY. Headquarters of the Mediterranean Allied Tactical Air Forces (MATAF) commanded by Major General John K. Cannon was located near BASTIA and the presence of the Advance Detachment there served to expedite the determination of priorities and the most effective allocation of available means.

7. The Advance Detachment also served as a nucleus for the organization of the Headquarters Sixth Army Group. Consequently at this early period many officers had dual assignments. In short, so far as command post installations and key personnel were concerned, the Advance Detachment, Allied Force Headquarters and the Headquarters Sixth Army Group were one and the same. For security reasons the designation of the Advance Detachment rather than Headquarters Sixth Army Group was used at BASTIA. Actually on 1 August General Devers was acting in a number of capacities as follows. He was Deputy Supreme Allied Commander of the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO)*, Commanding General, North African Theater of Operations, United States Army, (NATOUSA); Commanding General, Advance Detachment Allied Force Headquarters; and finally, Commanding General Sixth Army Group. This centralization of authority imposed heavy responsibilities on General Devers but had the advantage of insuring coordination among the headquarters concerned.

8. On 1 August, there was dispatched from Headquarters NATOUSA, a letter to all concerned, giving notice of the establishment of the Sixth Army Group Headquarters, and listing its components which consisted of a Headquarters, a Headquarters Company, and Special Troops. (5) (28)

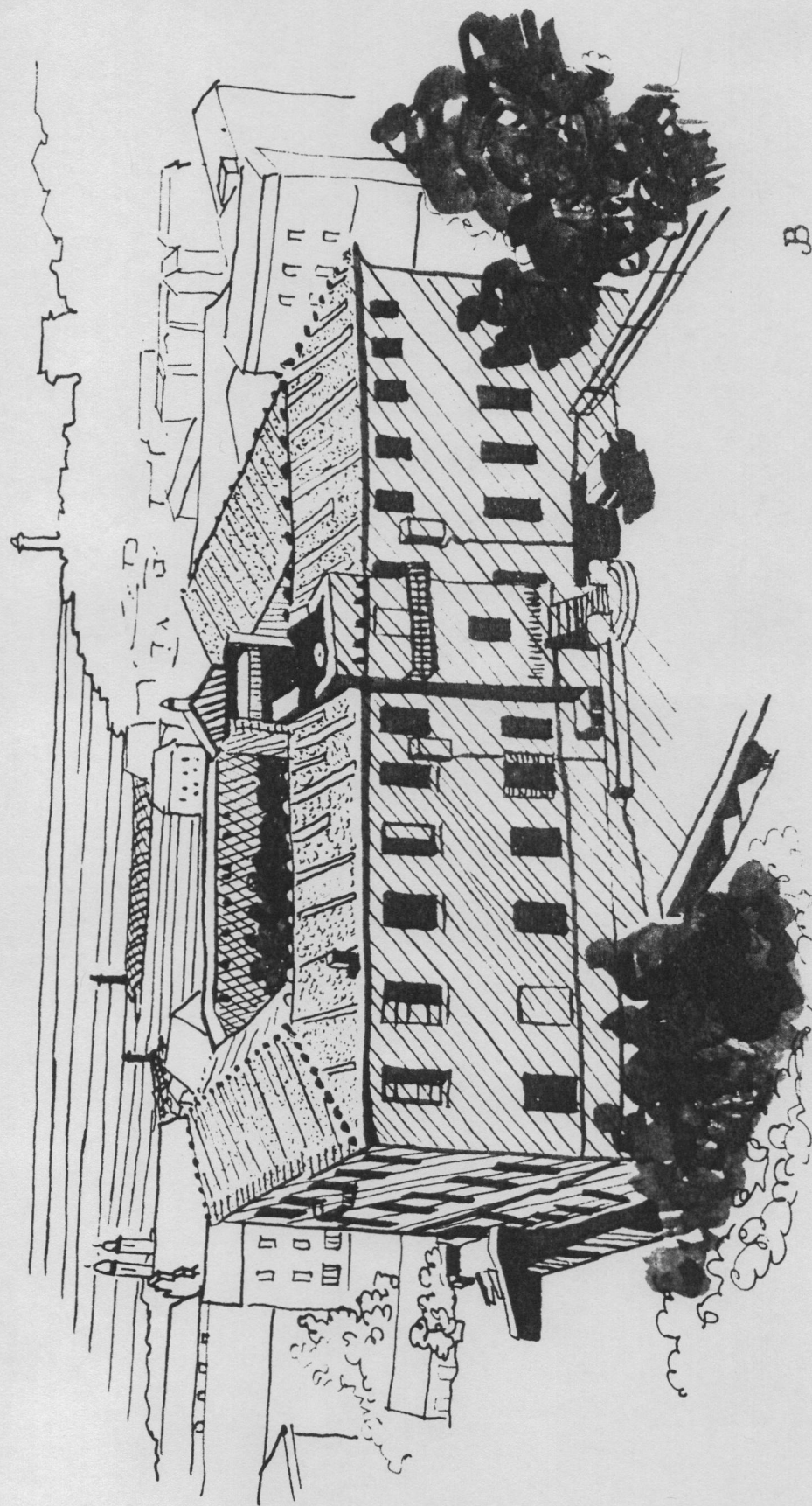
9. On the 27th of July, the G-3 Section "NATOUSA" furnished to the Chief of Staff of that Headquarters a study on the subject of the functions of a Headquarters Group of Armies. (6) The main points of the concept presented in this study are as follows.

10. The Army Group Headquarters is the Headquarters of a tactical unit and has no strategic functions except the execution of strategic directives received from the Theater Commander. Therefore it is not expected to become involved in strategic studies. Territorial jurisdiction is left to the armies except that the Group Headquarters will insure compliance with the policies of the Theater Commander. A Group Headquarters should have few supply or administrative functions since the bulk of these are more appropriately performed by the Theater Commander.

11. The Chief of Staff should be a senior officer of broad experience, provided with a competent deputy and necessary assistants, so that he may devote most of his time and attention to operational matters.

12. The G-1 Section will have normal functions. However, in the case of the Sixth Army Group, the personnel policies of the French Section of G-1

*The command of the Mediterranean Theater of Operations was vested in General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, GBE, KCB, DSO, ADC, and was exercised through Allied Force Headquarters then located in CASERTA, ITALY.



B

will emanate from the French High Command.*

13. G-2 has no operating intelligence agencies of his own but will secure information from other headquarters. He therefore needs an ample and experienced liaison group. He will exercise supervision over subordinate units in their operation of intelligence and counter-intelligence measures and the use of codes and ciphers as well as the censorship of soldier's mail and that of prisoners of war, in accordance with policies established by Theater Headquarters.

14. G-3 should rarely, if ever, need to prepare detailed field orders. The rule should be brief orders of the mission type, including objectives, boundaries, timing, air-ground coordination, main axes of advance and allocation of means. Other G-3 functions will include estimates of additional means required, maintenance of the troop list and general supervision of training. To perform these functions it appears that G-3 will require a fairly large operations and plans group, an Administrative and Supervisory Group and a Liaison Group of experienced officers.

15. The functions of G-4 - Prepares estimates of requirements based on plans, prepares requests upon the Theater Commander for credits. Allocates credits to the Armies and establishes priorities for movement of these credits. Supervises the Administration by Armies of evacuation, hospitalization, supply and maintenance.

16. The G-5 Section supervises the work of the armies in the fields of public relations, publicity, censorship, psychological warfare, military government and civil affairs.**

17. The Special Staff will include sections for the several component arms such as field artillery, anti-aircraft artillery and armored units.*** It should also provide liaison with the Office of Strategic Services, French Forces of the Interior and other special operating groups. Finally it will include an Advance Liaison Section from SOS (Services of Supply) NATOUSA.

18. After general approval of the foregoing study a table of organization or Manning Table was prepared. (7) It provided for 198 Officers, 20 Warrant Officers and 338 Enlisted Men, an aggregate of 556. A chart showing the headquarters organization as of 20 November is inserted at that date.

19. Because the Sixth Army Group was not initially an operating headquarters it was not necessary to concentrate all components at BASTIA. Some were assembled at I'LE ROUSSE, a small port on the Northwest coast of CORSICA, and others in ITALY awaiting transportation direct to the French

*Actually the personnel policies for the French were directed by G-1. The French Section of G-1 acted in an advisory capacity.

**From the beginning public relations, publicity and censorship of press and radio were actually handled under "Information and Censorship" (INC) represented by the Public Relations Officer (PRO). Psychological warfare was handled by a separate section.

***These were actually established as sub-sections under G-3.

mainland when the headquarters should be moved and established there.

20. The build up in strength actually on duty at BASTIA and I'LE ROUSSE is indicated by the following table which includes personnel assigned, attached, on temporary duty, and attached units.

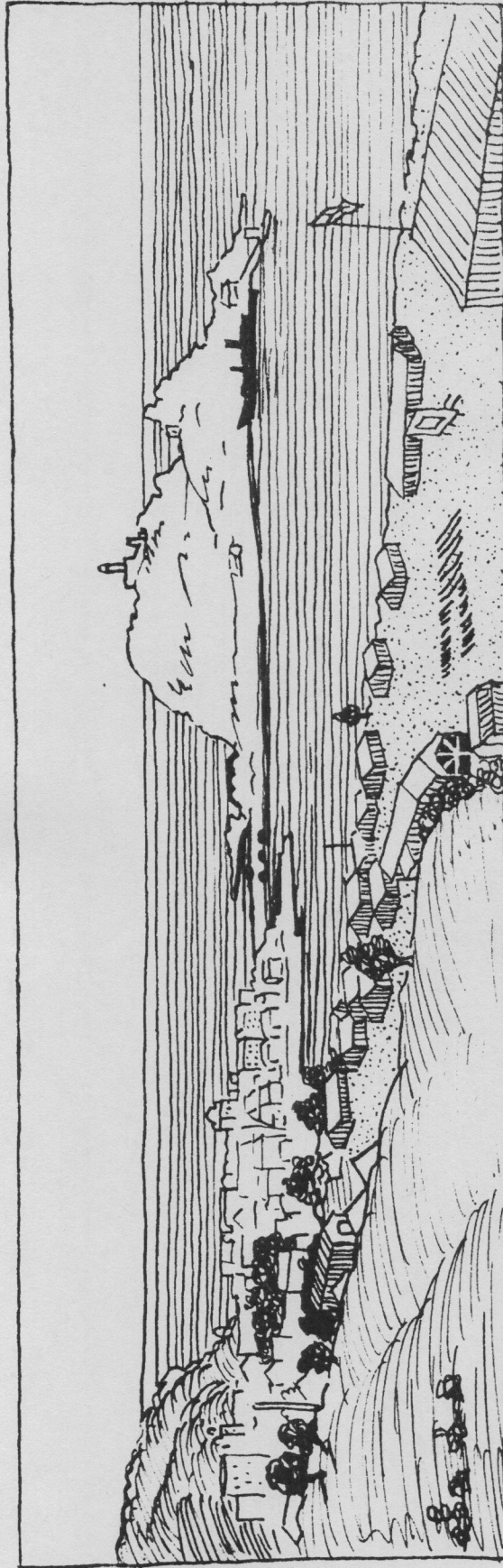
Date	Officers and Warrant Officers	Enlisted Men	Total
1 August	33	122	155
10 August	36	202	238
20 August	65	391	456
30 August	149	463	612

21. On 27 August the appointments of the Chief of Staff and of the heads of General and Special Staff sections were announced in orders as follows: (8)

<u>Chief of Staff</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Major General David G. Barr, GSC	1 August 1944
<u>Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1</u>	
Major General Ben M. Sawbridge, GSC	27 August 1944
<u>Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2</u>	
Brigadier General Frank A. Allen, Jr., GSC	4 August 1944
<u>Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3</u>	
Brigadier General Reuben E. Jenkins, GSC	1 August 1944
<u>Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4</u>	
Brigadier General Clarence L. Adcock, GSC	10 August 1944
<u>Engineer</u>	
Brigadier General Henry C. Wolfe, U.S.A.	14 August 1944
<u>Signal Officer</u>	
Colonel Emil Lenzner, Sig C.	10 August 1944
<u>Adjutant General</u>	
Colonel James L. Tarr, AGD	1 August 1944
<u>Headquarters Commandant</u>	
Major Hal L. Bemis, Inf.	16 August 1944

22. The complete organization and assembly of Headquarters Sixth Army Group was delayed to some extent because all available shipping had been committed for the build up of the 7th Army in FRANCE. This Army was then engaged in a race to the North to cut off German escape routes from South-western FRANCE.

23. On 31 August General Sawbridge, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, assumed the duties of Acting Chief of Staff in the temporary absence of General Barr.



ILLE ROUSSE, CORSICA

24. On 31 August and 1 September part of the headquarters was moved by transport planes to ST. TROPEZ, a coastal town located about thirty miles Southwest of CANNES on the French Riviera. (9) Also on 1 September most of the remaining personnel and equipment were moved West across the mountains by motor transportation to I'LE ROUSSE. Loading on LST (Landing Ship Tank) No. 32 was completed the following day, but sailing was delayed pending the loading of other LST's of the convoy. In the early hours of 3 September a very heavy electrical storm with rain and high winds struck I'LE ROUSSE. LST No. 32 was hit by lightning, but fortunately there was no material damage nor any casualties. The convoy sailed about dawn, plunging through such heavy seas that considerable extra lashing was required to keep vehicles and other cargo in place. The preparation and serving of meals was difficult, but the requirements for food were much reduced. On arrival at ST. TROPEZ on the morning of 4 September, a beach landing was effected and unloading continued during the day and following night.

25. Signal communication facilities for Headquarters Sixth Army Group opened at ST. TROPEZ, FRANCE, 1800 hours, 31 August 1944. (9) The Advance Detachment, Allied Force Headquarters, including General Devers, General Allen, G-2, and General Jenkins, G-3, remained at BASTIA for a few days longer. The strength of the detachment was much reduced by departures of personnel for ST. TROPEZ.

26. After conference with General Wilson, General Devers on 3 September flew to SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces) Forward Command Post for conference with the Supreme Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, United States Army. Accompanying General Devers were Major General Thomas B. Larkin, Commanding SOS NATOUSA, Brigadier General George C. Stewart, Chief of Transportation, NATOUSA, and Lieutenant General Ira Eaker, commanding the Mediterranean Allied Air Force (MAAF). Agenda included the situation on the several European fronts and the proposed channels for command of the DRAGOON Forces* after passing to SHAEF. The serious problems of supply and signal communications were given primary consideration. An interesting discussion of factors involved is found in General Wilson's cable of 3 September. (10) Among the documents there is included General Wilson's review of the situation in the entire Mediterranean Theater under date of 2 September. He expresses high praise and approval of the planning and execution of operation DRAGOON, and cites reasons why Headquarters Sixth Army Group should shortly take over command of Southern FRANCE. (11) General Eisenhower's evaluation of the situation and his intentions at this time are contained in his directive dated 4 September. (12) In paragraph 4 thereof he states:

4. DRAGOON force is now directed on DIJON - BESANCON and then on EPINAL - BELFORT. Present plans contemplate assumption of operational control of DRAGOON force about 15th September.

27. On 5 September the addition of a small British increment to the headquarters was announced. It was headed by Lieutenant Colonel M. L. C. Reynolds. (13)(40)

*The DRAGOON Forces comprised the Seventh Army, French Army "B" and attached units engaged in the invasion of Southern FRANCE.

28. General Devers returned to BASTIA 6 September and on 7 September flew to Headquarters 7th Army at GRENOBLE, FRANCE where he acquainted its commander Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch, United States Army, with the agreements reached with General Wilson and General Eisenhower. General Patch outlined his current estimate of the situation, his dispositions and his plans of action. As was the case with the armies to the North, it was clear that the rate of advance was limited more by difficulties of supply than by any determined and effective enemy resistance. While at GRENOBLE, General Devers sent a radio to the Acting Chief of Staff, Sixth Army Group to move the headquarters to LYON without delay.

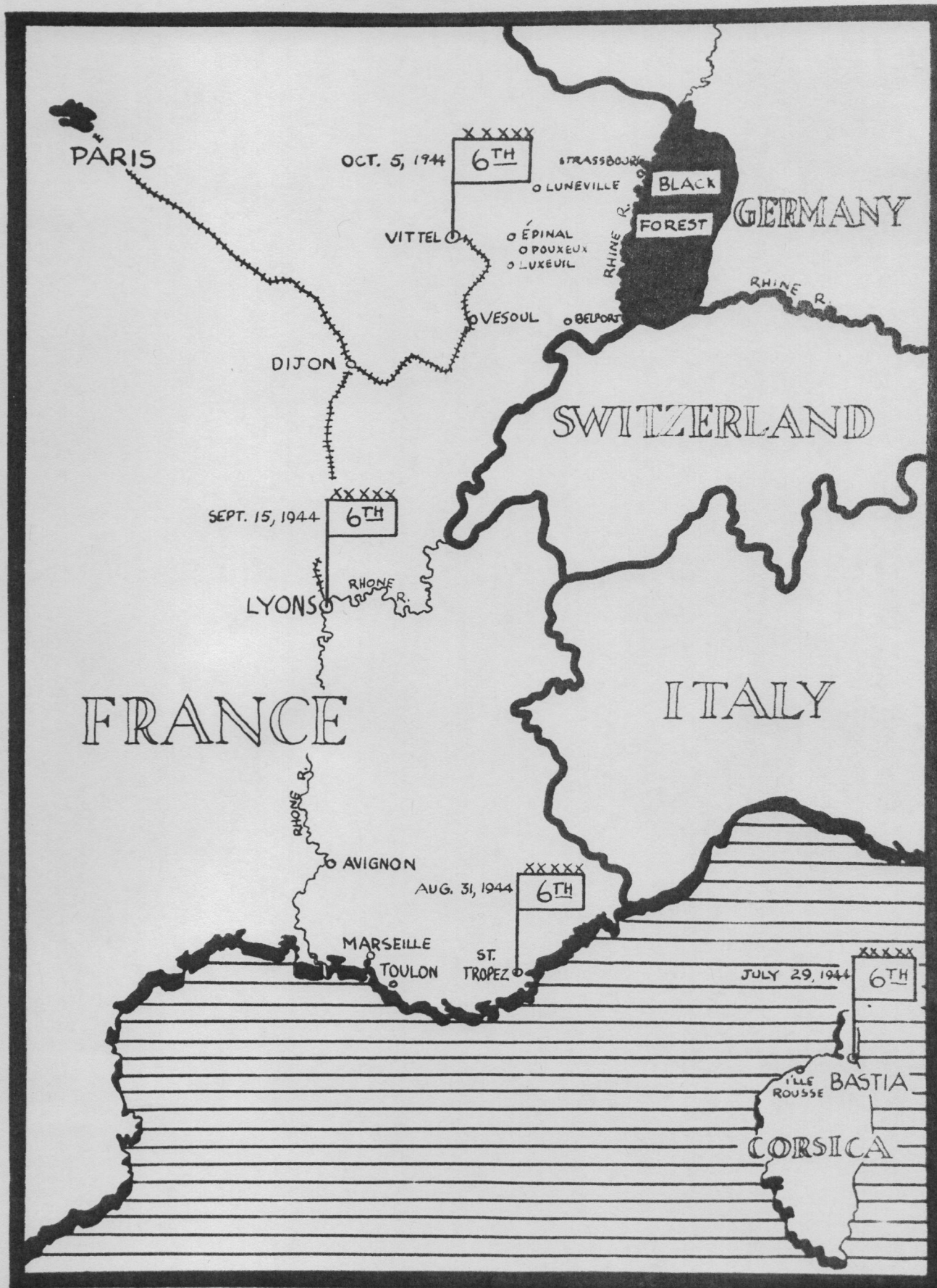
29. The following day the Commanding General returned to his headquarters at ST. TROPEZ and held a conference to acquaint his staff with late developments and decisions. Also in attendance was Vice Admiral H. K. Hewitt, United States Navy, task force commander of the naval forces involved in the invasion of Southern FRANCE and as such, responsible for the naval functions incident to the operation of landing beaches and the opening of ports. The urgency of opening the port of MARSEILLES was stressed by General Devers. Admiral Hewitt explained that, realizing the critical need for protected anchorages and accessible docks, he had from the first allocated all available and usable means to the work of clearing the harbor. This however was proving a task of considerable magnitude which had to be pursued on a step by step basis. Divers were required for removal of underwater obstacles and mine sweeping operations for removal of the magnetic and other mines so plentifully sown throughout the harbor. However, diving operations and mine sweeping could not be carried on concurrently because the detonation of mines would kill all submerged divers in the vicinity. The Admiral agreed to bend every effort toward making the port facilities of MARSEILLES available for use as rapidly as possible. He also expressed the belief that the port of TOULON would prove of supplementary value chiefly because of its protected anchorage. The usefulness of TOULON was limited by severe damage to the water front, making it impracticable to remove cargo from the docks by rail.

30. For movement of supplies over the long supply line forward from the ports it was obvious that the rail lines up the RHONE valley should be put in operation as promptly as possible. From his air reconnaissance General Devers was of the opinion that the available rolling stock far exceeded early estimates, and so decision was made to push the use of rail transportation to the maximum with consequent relief to the overtaxed motor transportation.

31. The Commanding General would have preferred DIJON to LYON for his headquarters but at this time the DIJON area was not yet cleared of the enemy. On hearing the estimate for the motor transportation required for the move, he expressed his desire for a relatively small and mobile headquarters, and discouraged further requests for additional personnel.

32. Relative to the establishment of signal communications, priority was directed for adequate channels to SHAEF, 7th Army and the French Army "B".

33. The Headquarters had frequently been referred to as "Sixth Army Group Headquarters" but on 8 September its official designation was announced as "Headquarters Sixth Army Group". (14)



34. On 9 September orders were issued directing movement of the headquarters by motor transportation from ST. TROPEZ to LYON, FRANCE, beginning 10 September. (15) As the supply of motor transportation was still critical it was expected that completion of the move would require a week or more.

35. Colonel William R. Watson, IGD, was assigned as Inspector General Sixth Army Group, Colonel David S. McLean, JAGD, as Judge Advocate (16) and Lieutenant Colonel William J. McWilliams, GSC, as Secretary General Staff (17)

36. Because the port facilities in Western FRANCE had not been developed as rapidly as hoped, SHAEF proposed to divert a corps of three divisions to the DRAGOON forces provided they could be accepted by the ports of Southern FRANCE. This would serve both to relieve congestion in Western FRANCE and to augment the 7th Army. Anticipating approval of this plan, G-4, about 9 September, personally presented at SHAEF a detailed request for the necessary increase in supporting and service troops. By careful study of all aspects of the problem and maximum use of organizations already available this request was held to a minimum. The request included a total of 30 supporting combat units and 275 service units with summary of strengths as follows: Quote-

SUMMARY

TOTAL TROOPS DIVISIONS, CORPS & ARMY	83,186	
TOTAL TROOPS BASE SECTION	<u>20,136</u>	
	103,322	Unquote.

37. On the morning of 9 September a ship convoy arrived at ST. TROPEZ bringing elements of the headquarters which had assembled at NAPLES. This shipment included 35 Officers and 68 Enlisted Men. At this time the bay at ST. TROPEZ was well filled with shipping and day and night the beaches were humming with activity to expedite unloading.

38. On this same day General Devers flew to Allied Force Headquarters at CASERTA for conference with General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson. Agreement was reached on appropriate recommendations to the combined Chiefs of Staff covering future changes in command relations and assignments. He returned to ST. TROPEZ the next evening.

39. Between 11 and 15 September representatives of General and Special Staff sections visited AFHQ and NATOUSA at CASERTA, SHAEF Advanced CP at GRANVILLE, FRANCE, Headquarters Communications Zone, European Theater of Operations, (ETO), in PARIS and Headquarters Twelfth Army Group at VERSAILLES. These visits were for the coordination of mutual problems which would result from operational control of Sixth Army Group by one commander while logistical support was furnished by another. The build up of supporting units and service troops to care for probable increase in combat units was also discussed. A C-53 transport plane was used for the trip. A fighter escort of four P-51's was picked up at MARSEILLES but there remained the danger of tree-top flying under very low lying clouds as well as difficulty in picking out the one correct landing field among so many similar fields. Sometimes scheduled landings were prevented by fog and the party was faced with a real problem in securing transportation from the scene of emergency landings elsewhere.

40. On 12 September, General Jenkins conferred with Maj. Gen. Robert T.

Frederick at the latter's headquarters in NICE. General Frederick was commanding the First Airborne Task Force (18) and was operating under General Patch, 7th Army, protecting the right flank of the army and of its lines of communication to the MEDITERRANEAN. While this mission was generally defensive, General Frederick was conducting limited objective attacks designed to secure a strong line of fortress towns and key passes which, once in his possession, should enable his forces to hold against superior strength.

41. In connection with the proposed shifts in command it was apparent that 7th Army should be freed from responsibility for flank protection extending far to its right rear. It seemed logical to plan for the centralization of the right flank protection under a single commander who would be directly responsible either to the Commanding General of the communications zone concerned or to the Commanding General Sixth Army Group. General Frederick strongly favored the latter plan. He also pointed out his shortcomings in special units and service troops due to the peculiar nature of his forces and his lack of reserves due to his extended front. Some remedial measures were already planned and others were initiated.

42. On 14 September a message was received from General Sir Henry Matland Wilson, (SACMED) directing that the Sixth Army Group become operational in the DRAGOON area at 0001B hours 15 September. The message further announced the passage to SHAEF of operational control of all Allied Ground Forces in Southern FRANCE on the same date and hour. Responsibility for administration, logistical support and maintenance of DRAGOON Forces and civil affairs within the area were retained by SACMED for the time being. Details regarding control of Air Force units were added. (19) Civil Affairs of the 31 departments of Southern FRANCE originally under AFHQ had been delegated as a responsibility of the Commanding General 7th Army. As of 0001B hours 15 September this responsibility was transferred by SACMED to the Commanding General Sixth Army Group. (20)

43. By 15 September, thanks to strenuous motor shuttling supplemented by air transport, the several staff sections together with the necessary signal communications and other services were operating in the Palais de la Foire at LYON. Headquarters Sixth Army Group assumed operational control of the 7th Army and the French Army "B" at 0001B hours on that date. The headquarters had already done considerable "operating" both to effect its own organization and to lay the ground-work for proper logistical support, flank protection and other essentials for the armies it was destined to control. There had also been considerable activity in the fields of staff studies, advance planning and liaison. However the date of 15 September is significant in that it marks the birthday of the Sixth Army Group and the assumption by the group headquarters of its full responsibilities. The method and general provisions under which General Devers assumed command are contained in a memorandum as follows: Quote-

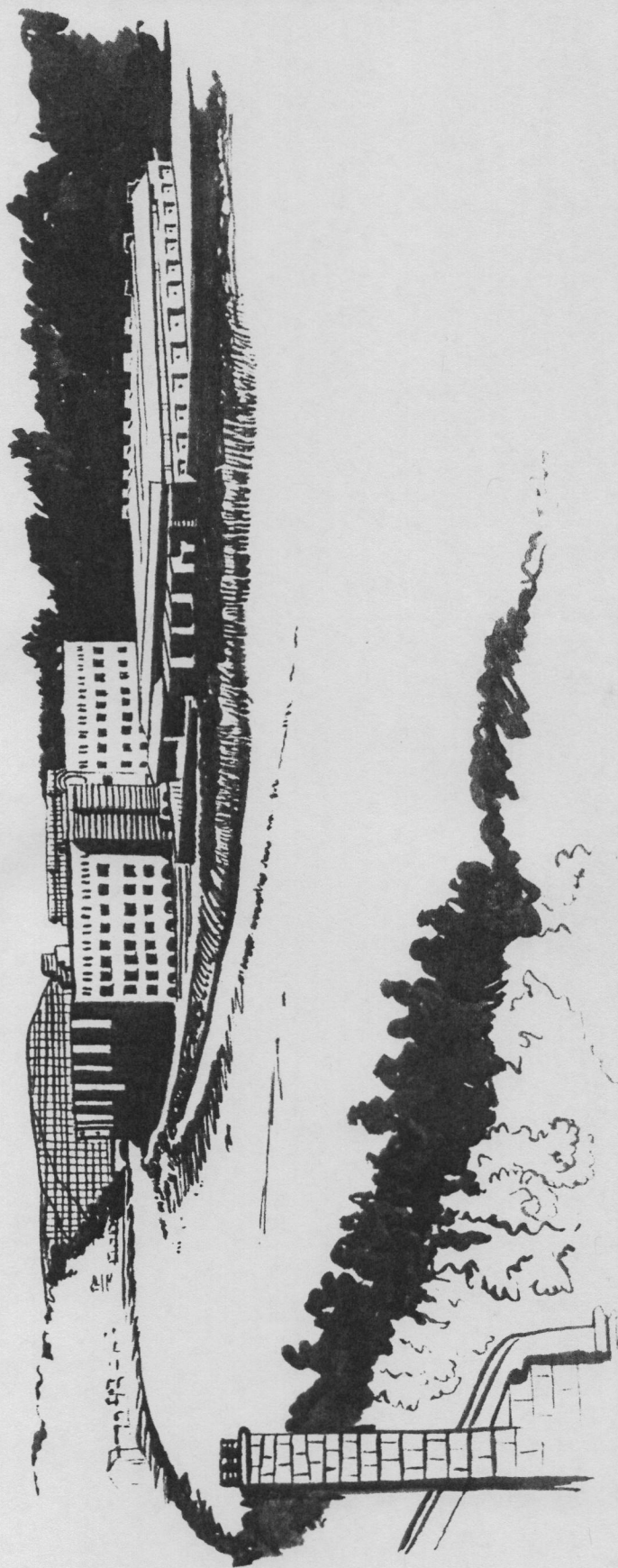
~~TOP SECRET~~

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY GROUP
A. P. O. 23 US ARMY

15 September 1944

OPERATIONAL MEMORANDUM)

NUMBER 1)



ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND OF DRAGOON FORCES

1. Effective 0001B hours, 15 September 1944, as directed by AFHQ message, dated 14 September 1944, the Commanding General Sixth Army Group, assumed command of all Allied Ground and Service Forces in the DRAGOON area, except those units assigned to, or reserved for assignment to SOS, (earmarked for CONBASE) and those units presently assigned to AFHQ, NATOUSA and Hq Cmd AF.
2. Headquarters Seventh Army is relieved of responsibility for operational control and direction of French Army "B". Pending further instructions and complete adjustment of the necessary maintenance channels, Headquarters Seventh Army will continue to be responsible for maintenance and other logistical support of French Army "B".
3. Pending receipt of an operational directive from these Headquarters the Commanding General Seventh Army will continue operations with his Army in accordance with his last operational directive.
4. Pending receipt of an operational directive from these Headquarters the Commanding General French Army "B" and the Commanders of detached elements thereof will continue operations in accordance with instructions issued by the Commanding General Seventh Army. The Commanding General French Army "B" will institute immediate measures for the assumption of all maintenance and administrative responsibility for his forces and for the relief of the Commanding General Seventh Army of these responsibilities at the earliest practicable date.
5. Commanders Army "B" and Seventh Army are responsible for dissemination of such information as is necessary to subordinate commanders e.g. A/B Task Force and French troops now securing the right flank and which may ultimately pass to direct control of Headquarters Sixth Army Group.
6. Except for assumption of operational control of XII Tactical Air Command by Commanding General IX Air Force, no change in existing arrangements for air support of Seventh Army and French Army "B" is anticipated at this time.
7.
 - a. The official language for messages, orders, and other instructions issued by these Headquarters will be English.
 - b. All messages to this Headquarters will be in English. The functions and physical location of 6693rd Signal Detachment (Overhead) will not be changed. The transfer of this unit from assignment to the Seventh Army to the Sixth Army Group will be accomplished at a later date.
 - c. The major portion of the French Translation Group of the AG Section, Headquarters Seventh Army, will be made available to French Army "B", effective at once. Detailed instructions for this transfer will be issued by separate communication.
8. Effective 15 September 1944, the Commanding General Seventh Army and the Commanding General French Army "B" will each render combined Intelligence and Operations Reports to these Headquarters promptly at 1200 hours daily, giving the situation as known at that hour. A similar

report will be rendered promptly at 2200 hours daily which will include only the changes in the situation which have occurred since the report rendered at 1200 hours. These reports will be prepared in the form shown at Appendix A* and sent by radio with an "URGENT" classification. In addition to these combined Intelligence and Situation Reports, fragmentary reports will be rendered promptly on all events of such importance as to warrant or require this action.**

9. Effective 15 September 1944, the Commanding General Seventh Army is relieved of responsibility for rendering all operational and intelligence reports to all higher headquarters other than Sixth Army Group including the daily report to SACMED previously rendered. Reports of this nature hereafter will be rendered to the proper headquarters by the Commanding General Sixth Army Group.

10. Two copies of General Staff Section (G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, and G-5) Periodic Reports will be forwarded by Army "B" and Seventh Army so as to reach these Headquarters by 1200 hours of the day following the date covered by the report.

11. Five copies of all orders, memoranda and operational instructions will be forwarded by Army "B" and Seventh Army so as to reach these Headquarters not later than 12 hours after publication.

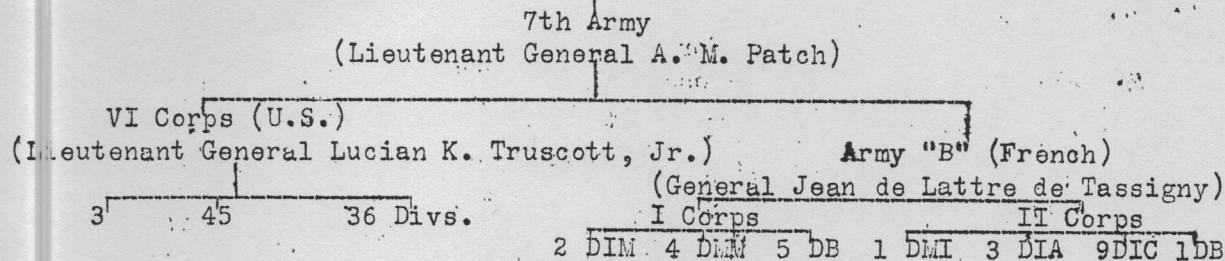
12. Announcement of broad policies and function of Sixth Army Group and relationships to be established between Sixth Army Group and other headquarters will be made at an early date.

By Command of Lieutenant General DEVERS:

BEN M. SAWBRIDGE,
Major General, G. S. C.,
Acting Chief of Staff. Unquote.

44. The general organization and command channels for the Seventh Army in the DRAGOON operation as of 14 September are shown in the following chart:

MTO.

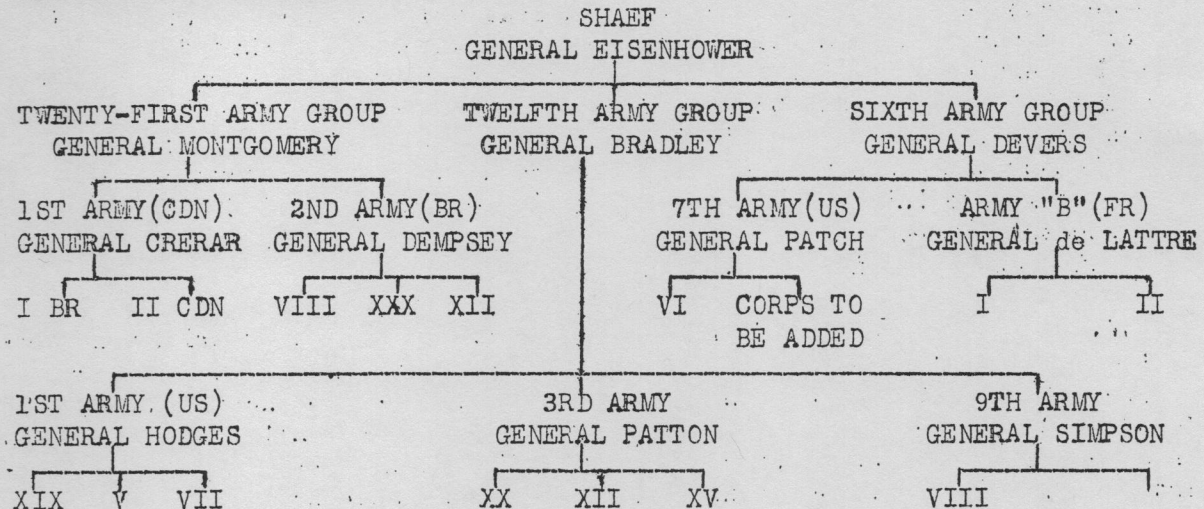


DIM is Division, Infantry, Moroccan DMI is Division, Marche, Infantry
DIM is Division, Moroccan, Mountain DIA is Division, Infantry, Algerian
DB is Division, Blindee' (Armored) DIC is Division, Infantry, Colonial

*For Appendix "A" and distribution list see Document No. 14.

**Changes in paragraphs 8, 9, and 10 were published 20 September. (22)

Operational command of the Seventh Army was left in the hands of its commander, General Patch from "D" Day, 15 August, to include 14 September. The new organization and operational controls under SHAEF effective 15 September are indicated below.



For commanders and principal Staff Officers of French Army "B" and its larger included units see Document No. 16. At staff conference, 19 September, General Devers announced that at the request of the French authorities, Army "B" would henceforth be known as "First French Army". It should be noted in connection with frontages that the Sixth Army Group had only three corps as compared with five for the Twenty-First Army Group and seven for the Twelfth Army Group. At this time General Devers, in addition to the command of the Sixth Army Group, was still Commanding General, NATOUSA, and was serving as Deputy Supreme Commander, Mediterranean Theater under General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson. These relationships, the dependence of DRAGOON Forces on the Mediterranean Theater for logistical support and the continuing control of Administration and Civil Affairs by SACMED, all combined to divide the control of Sixth Army Group between two commanders. This unusual situation arose from the need for unified operational command in FRANCE and the practical necessity of using the resources and installations of the Mediterranean Theater for logistical support of the armies advancing from Southern FRANCE. Effort was made to lessen the evils of dual control by limiting the spheres of authority of SCAEF and SACMED so as to avoid or minimize overlapping.

45. Initially the designation of boundaries for the Seventh Army would have been unwise due to its very considerable distance from other Allied forces. However its rapid advance and contact with the Third Army North of DIJON on 16 September raised the question of a left boundary for the Seventh Army and the Sixth Army Group and several possible solutions were considered. One of these, the general line LANGRES - EPINAL - STRASBOURG gave the Sixth Army Group a frontage commensurate with its existing strength but, looking to the future, it was apparent that crossings of the RHINE within the zone thus assigned would lead the advancing troops into the mazes of the BLACK FOREST and deny them suitable ground for offensive maneuver and reasonably direct and favorable routes toward any important objectives in GERMANY. Another boundary considered was the general line LANGRES - EPINAL - SARRBURG - LANDAU - HOCKENHEIM. This line provided the desired maneuver

room and favorable routes of advance on the left, but it would spread so thin the limited strength then available to Sixth Army Group that the necessary concentration of force and the reserves required to make a powerful attack on any portion of the front would be lacking. This lack was the more serious because of the very limited available strength in armor and supporting air units. As has been noted, it was expected that Seventh Army would be reinforced by three additional divisions, but these were not expected until November and General Devers was opposed to withholding his attack until the weight of this increment could be applied at the front. On 17 September a message was received from SHAEF approving a boundary along the general line LANGRES - EPINAL - SARRBURG - LANDAU - HOCKENHEIM subject to agreement between the commanders of the Sixth and Twelfth Army Groups as to details and effective date. (24)

46. On 17 September a French Military Mission headed by Brigadier General de Hesdin, arrived for duty with the Headquarters. On the same day Lieutenant Colonel George F. Ashworth, GSC, was appointed Acting Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, because of the transfer of General Allen to SHAEF. (25) On 23 September the appointment of Colonel Eugene L. Harrison, GSC, as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, this headquarters was announced. (25) Colonel Harrison was transferred from the G-3 Section where he had served as Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans.

47. On 26 September, Colonel Henry Parkman Jr., was appointed Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5, (26) and on the following day Brigadier General Tristram Tupper was assigned as Public Relations Officer. (27) For reference purposes the following are included in the document file; telephone directory, Document 18; roster of Staff Officers, Headquarters Sixth Army Group, Document 19; and roster of Staff Officers of French Army "B" (First French Army) and of large units, Document 16.



SIXTH ARMY GROUP SITUATION MAP

Note: Arrows along West bank of RHINE simply denote location and orientation of old Maginot Line fortifications. They do not indicate movement.

Notes on Contact between Seventh and Third Armies



- 11 September - - First contact. Not firm nor continuous.
Message 7th Army, 11 Sept 44, CPX 13456 AG 370.2-6
"Spot report as of 111630B. The first contact was established between Seventh Army and Third Army Forces when an Officer of the First French Armored Division shook hands with an Officer of the second French Armored Division at 1500B today in the vicinity of SOMBERNON N-7959."
- 12 September - - Contact in force by strong detached force (1RCT) but continuous line not yet established. (G-3 Maj Adams)
Message 7th Army, 12 Sept 44, CPK 13505 AG 370.2-6
"1 DMI: 1 RCT linked in force with Armoured Regiment of CC-2 of 2 DB (Third Army) at CHATILLON, H-6721 at 120700B. Enemy resistance CHATILLON ceased. Enemy withdrawing to East."
- 14 September - - Firm contact with continuous lines established sealing off the last remaining escape route for Germans in Southwestern France. G-3 Report After Action Against Enemy for period 150001B Sept 44 to 302400A November 44, dated 15 Nov 44 AG 314.7-1
"The 1st French March Infantry Division of II French Corps had made contact on 12 September at CHATILLON-SUR-SEINE (H-6720) and on 14 September at (2-0845) southeast of CHAUMONT (2-0649) with elements of the 2nd French Armored Division which was operating under XV Corps of the Third Army. This firm contact sealed off the last remaining escape route to Germany for the enemy forces in Southwest France.

Message 7th Army, 15 Sept 44, CP 13657 AG 370.2-6
"Army B: II Corps, 1 DMI in AUTUN CHATILLON. 1 DB in LANGRES, J-2423, FAY BILLOT, J-4515."
- 16 September - - Probable date of contact between elements of Seventh Army (which by that date no longer included French Army B) during regrouping operations to put U.S. forces on left and French forces on right.